

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

REPORT
OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT
OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OF THE
STATE OF FLORIDA,
FOR THE
Year Ending September 30, 1871.

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For the Year ending September 30, 1871.

I entered upon the duties of my present office about the middle of March, 1871. Half the school-year, including those months in which the schools are mostly sustained, had already elapsed. The year between September 30, 1870 and October 1, 1871, may be described as on the whole a year of progress in spite of checks and hindrances. The system of free schools, on its adoption the previous year, appeared, in the language of Mr. Chase, "to have reconciled, for the first time in the history of the Educational legislation of the South, the extreme views of conflicting parties and interests." At the next session of the Legislature the Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction states:

"Boards of instruction have been appointed in all the counties excepting one. From this county no suggestions have been received on the subject. Organizations have been completed in twenty-six counties. Schools have been opened in an equal number. Eleven counties are wanting county superintendents qualified and commissioned to act. Eight have not organized for want of these officers. The census returns have been received from twenty-six. The assessors in several have failed to take the census. There are over 250 schools in operation, having an attendance of over 7,500 pupils. Private schools have generally been merged in free schools. Their numbers have immediately increased. Some have doubled, others have quadrupled their attendance. Fifteen counties have levied no tax. In nine of these, schools have been organized and sustained by private contributions under the law."

Several causes operated to check the momentum of the move-

ment so auspiciously inaugurated. The alienation of the head of the department from the Executive of the State; the temporary vacancy in the office consequent upon Mr. Chase's death; the action of the Legislature limiting the amount of taxation for school purposes in the several counties to one mill; the failure of the State to pay the interest on the school fund in currency; and, finally, the irregularities in different counties connected with the assessment and collection of the school taxes; these with other causes exerted a formidable power to retard the movement. It is not necessary to dwell upon these points which are but too well understood. I allude to them simply as items of the history of the educational system, for the purpose of remarking that though there was a check, and a degree of discouragement, that check was far less serious, and that discouragement less disastrous than might have been anticipated.

Instead of fifteen counties that failed the year previous to levy a school tax, we have to report but four. Instead of thirteen counties wanting organized boards of public instruction, we have only one. Instead of eleven counties wanting superintendents, all but two are now supplied. Instead of 250 schools, with 7,500 pupils, we report 331 schools, with 14,000 pupils. Such an advance would be creditable in a year when circumstances were favorable; much more when occurring in a year when such serious causes of hindrance existed. The conduct of the people of the State in regard to taxation for schools has been praiseworthy. Although the law limited the rate of taxation to one mill, several counties assessed a tax of one and a half, two, and even two and a half mills, and the people paid cheerfully. Although the subject of taxation has been misunderstood, though financial embarrassment, losses, and impoverishment have weighed heavily upon the community, yet there appears to have been a willingness on the part of the people with comparatively few exceptions, to be taxed for the support of schools. The returns from the several counties are incomplete. Twenty-four counties give an aggregate of \$31,162.43 assessed, and \$24,364.49 collected, being an average of \$1,298.43 assessed, and \$1,160.21 collected, per county. Estimating the counties not reported at the same rate, and we have an aggregate of \$50,638.88 assessed, and \$41,767.64 collected.

The amount collected is thus shown to be about $82\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the amount assessed. Allowing the same rate of loss in collecting the State tax of one mill, or $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. we have \$28,516.43 as the approximate amount. Adding this to the amount raised by the counties, and we have a total of \$70,284.07 raised by taxation for the support of schools. In addition to this, much has been done to aid the work by private contributions among the patrons, of which our reports are very meagre. In eight counties the sum of \$8,777 has been thus given over and

above the taxation—either in land, rents, board of teachers, or money.

The amount apportioned to the several counties by the State was \$59,146.50, a sum which, if it had been paid in currency, would have nearly doubled the ability of the county boards to sustain schools. The failure of the State to pay this interest has been perhaps the severest disappointment the friends of education have had to endure. The disposition made of the warrants has varied in the different counties. Some have retained them, some have invested them in the bonds of 1871, but many have been obliged to sell, usually at 33 cents on the dollar. Nothing can be more injurious to the cause of education than such a course of virtual repudiation if persisted in. If the State is to provide by specific legislation for the payment of the interest on any class of its bonds, it ought to be those on which the welfare of the rising generation chiefly depends. If any class of bonds is to be partially discredited both honor and expediency indicate it should not be those belonging to the schools and the children of the State.

The whole number of youth in the State between the ages of 4 and 21 is 62,869. The number enrolled in schools is 14,000, a little more than one-fifth. Four-fifths, nearly, of those between 4 and 21 remain as yet unreached by the system. In a State like Florida, however, the proper school age would be between 5 and 17. On this basis the proportion enrolled in schools would probably be much greater. And considering the newness of the system, the sparseness of the population, and the limited means at our disposal, it is encouraging to have already reached with the benefits of education one-fifth of the children of the State.

At the same time the spectacle of four-fifths of the youth of the State growing up in ignorance, should spur us on to greater efforts, and should demonstrate to all the absolute necessity of providing for the payment by the State of the interest on the school fund.

The average duration of schools has been four and two-thirds months. The average salary of teachers, \$30 per month.

It would be pleasant to speak of the prosperous condition of the schools now in operation, especially of the East and West Florida Seminaries, now so ably conducted by experienced instructors, and numerously attended. We are compelled, however, to defer these to our next Report. The attention of the Legislature is called to the fact that one of these Seminaries, that at Tallahassee, is now under the care of the Leon County Board of Public Instruction—while the other, at Gainesville, is independent of the State system.

The Constitution of the State declares the Legislature shall provide for a university. The act of Congress, however, of

March 3, 1843, endowing the seminaries, provides that there shall be two, one east and the other west of the Suwannee River.

Another act of Congress provides for the establishment of an agricultural college.

Now it may be doubted whether, at the present stage of development and progress, Florida can sustain one institution worthy of being called a college, or a university. But it is certain beyond a doubt that she cannot support three. To set up a common-school and call it a college, does not make it anything but a common school. If the grants of Congress, aforesaid, necessitate the attempt to sustain two seminaries and an agricultural college, those grants will be a curse rather than a blessing. If any way can be devised to unite the three, so as to establish a university, with an agricultural collegiate department, then we might hope for success.

Into the past history of the agricultural-scrip question it is not my purpose to look. As a measure of expediency, however, and as a measure of conciliation and harmony I should recommend that the Legislature authorize the Executive, as the proper officer, to receive from the General Government the agricultural land scrip, and to dispose of the same according to law.

I would also recommend that Congress be memorialized to grant all reserved lands in the State for educational purposes, also the old custom-house at St. Augustine, and permission to devote the proceeds of sales of seminary lands under act of March 3, 1843, to the support of a university instead of to the support of two seminaries.

Next to the financial obstacles to educational progress, is that arising from the want of suitable text-books. A large proportion of the people, if not a majority, are not able to buy. Consequently, a large number of pupils are destitute of text-books. Those who are supplied exhibit almost every variety of text-book known. In the language of one of the county superintendents, "The pupils are furnished by their parents with every description of books, such as they could pick here and there; the only book of one kind much in use being Webster's Elementary Spelling-book." The miscellany would be laughable if it were not so harassing and painful to both teacher and pupils. The strain on the teacher's mind and body is doubled by this chaos. The law provides that there shall be a uniform series for the State. Such a series has been selected. But how can it be introduced? Thus far it has but added to the confusion. It is impossible, in view of the slender means of the people, to force the series in at their expense. It must be done at the public expense. I therefore strongly recommend the passage of an act making it the duty of boards of public instruction to include this in their itemized estimate of annual expenses as now required by law; and prohibiting the use, after September 30, 1872, of any text-books, except

those of the State series. The books to be not the private property of individual pupils, but the property of the county boards, for the use of schools, parents or guardians being held accountable for their injury or loss, provided that parents who prefer to purchase for their children or wards be encouraged to do so.

The school law, as a whole, has worked well, and has commended itself increasingly to the confidence of the people. A few slight amendments have been suggested as desirable to obviate defects, and perfect the system:

1. It is recommended that county boards of public instruction be limited to three members. Thus their efficiency will be increased and expense diminished.

2. It is recommended that the census of youth be taken by the superintendent of schools once in five years. This will fall in with the regular duties of the superintendent, leading him to a more thorough visitation of the county, and will diminish the expense, while giving more reliable results.

3. It is recommended that the clerk of the court be required to report quarterly all fines to the superintendent of schools, and in case of neglect or refusal, be made to pay a fine equal to the whole amount.

It is recommended that section 5 of the act to provide a revenue for common schools, approved January 27, 1871, be so amended as that all forfeited moneys shall constitute a "contingent reserve fund" to be expended under the direction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the county so forfeiting, or in institutes for the higher instruction of teachers. Such amendment would be simply a return to the original provision of the school law on this subject, Sec. 37 of act approved January 30, 1869.

Provision was made by a former Legislature for the payment of teachers employed by the Freedmen's Bureau before the present system was adopted. A list of such claims was made out by my predecessor Mr. Chase, and an appropriation made, and the claims liquidated. During the present year two claims of the same description, which did not come to Mr. Chase's knowledge, have been presented. It is recommended that an appropriation be made to meet those claims.

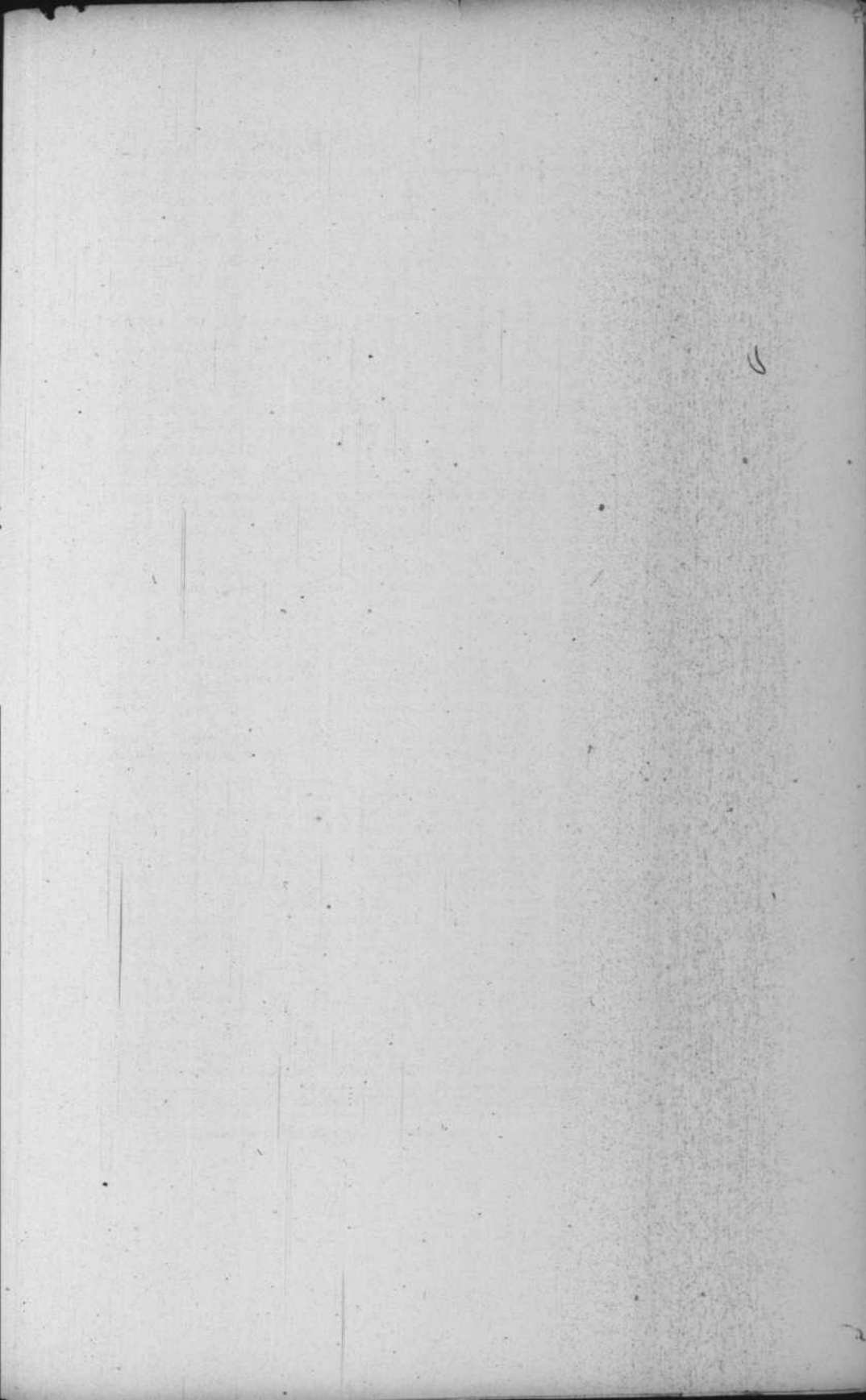
It is also to be stated that when the West Florida Seminary closed, previous to placing itself under the county board of public instruction, the trustees were unable from causes beyond their control to pay the instructors' salaries. Much inconvenience and suffering has been the result, to a corps of teachers of high character who had faithfully discharged the duties assigned them. It is recommended that an appropriation be made to pay these claims in full.

No provision has been made for the expenses of this department in connection with the Historical Bureau and Cabinet of Natural

History. There is believed to be valuable material in existence relating to the early history of Florida, both in relation to the aborigines, and to their Spanish conquerors. But it is impossible to discover, collect, transcribe, and classify such material without some expense. The same is true in regard to the natural history of the State. The law makes it my duty to attend to these matters, but no appropriation has ever been made for that purpose.

In concluding this report I have to apologize for its brevity and incompleteness. I am aware that the areas of several of the counties in square miles, are not correctly given; but have had no means of ascertaining the exact truth. The reports from the several counties have been so incomplete, uncertain, and so long delayed, as partially to affect the value of the results. I have done what I could under the circumstances. I trust another year, should the work continue in my charge, to present a statement that shall be more complete.

CHARLES BEECHER,
Superintendent Public Instruction.



SUMMARY OF

COUNTIES.	Area in square miles.	Population in 1870.	Number of youth between the ages of 4 and 21 years	Total valuation of real and personal property.	One mill State tax.	Tax assessed by the county for schools.	Tax collected.
Alachua.....	1,440	17,328	4,500	\$1,758,224	\$1,758.22	\$4,153.55	\$2,911.11
Baker.....	540	1,325	549	318,732	318.73	*	*
Bradford.....	940	2,671	1,400	693,447	693.44	455.79	315.00
Brevard.....	5,600	1,216	83	31,519	31.51	*	*
Calhoun.....	1,440	998	330	88,358	88.35	*	*
Clay.....	430	2,098	542	409,311	409.31	800.00	613.00
Columbia.....	864	7,335	3,218	1,494,425	1,494.42	1,499.29	1,244.36
Dade.....	4,400	185	50	28,575	28.57	*	*
Duval.....	860	11,921	3,650	3,543,664	3,543.66	*	*
Escambia.....	648	7,825	2,489	2,824,101	2,824.10	*	*
Franklin.....	612	1,915	414	231,642	231.64	*	*
Gadsden.....	792	9,802	1,845	1,658,882	1,658.88	1,412.00	*
Hamilton.....	400	5,749	1,373	895,030	895.03	1,433.50	1,387.86
Hernando.....	1,980	2,938	818	463,517	463.51	463.51	400.00
Hillsboro'.....	2,900	3,215	1,039	369,866	369.86	323.90	366.63
Holmes.....	396	1,572	462	112,776	112.77	*	*
Jackson.....	1,080	9,528	3,000	1,801,190	1,801.19	2,600.00	600.00
Jefferson.....	470	13,398	4,917	2,404,882	2,404.88	2,200.00	2,000.00
Lafayette.....	900	1,783	800	227,213	227.21	*	375.00
Leon.....	900	15,233	6,007	3,285,975	3,285.97	3,159.18	3,012.98
Levy.....	860	2,017	650	770,619	770.61	*	*
Liberty.....	900	1,050	380	304,413	304.41	216.49	20.00
Madison.....	800	11,121	4,976	1,790,109	1,790.10	1,203.00	1,115.00
Manatee.....	4,070	1,931	615	411,332	411.33	884.24	300.00
Marion.....	1,760	10,804	2,659	1,404,637	1,404.63	4,306.12	4,138.04
Monroe.....	3,060	5,637	2,314	1,078,75	1,078.75	1,130.00	1,050.00
Nassau.....	610	4,247	1,767	879,988	879.98	*	*
Orange.....	2,450	2,195	480	308,765	308.76	*	*
Polk.....	1,944	3,169	720	337,805	337.89	689.05	300.00
Putnam.....	610	3,821	1,851	678,508	678.50	951.57	764.36
Santa Rosa.....	1,440	3,312	1,827	713,104	713.10	*	*
St. Johns.....	900	2,618	986	694,383	694.38	*	*
Sumter.....	1,370	2,952	989	683,532	683.53	683.53	*
Suwannee.....	791	3,556	1,280	674,203	674.20	1,700.00	
Taylor.....	1,100	1,453	522	179,861	179.86	261.12	+
Volusia.....	2,196	1,723	421	306,074	306.07	*	*
Wakulla.....	504	2,506	800	268,580	268.58	317.96	250.00
Walton.....	1,480	3,041	1,148	261,079	261.07	547.20	547.20
Washington.....	1,100	2,302	997	286,586	286.58	139.00	*
Total.....	59,248	187,748	62,869	\$34,583,753	\$34,583.75	\$31,549.80	\$21,710.54

*No report. +Collected \$212; received \$198. †None

COUNTY REPORTS.

Number of schools.	Number of pupils.	Salary of county superintendent.	Compensation of Board of Public Instruction.	Total expenditure by Board Public Instruction for schools.	State apportionment.	Superintendent of Schools, their Post Office Address.
23	1,400	\$200.00		\$4,572.23	\$4,204.58	S. F. Halliday, Gainesville.
1	23	50.00	\$24.00	10.00	514.00	J. W. Howell, Sanderson.
15	506	124.00	127.00	707.00	1,309.18	J. R. Richard, Providence.
					8,232	Jas. Paine, sr., Indian River.
5	100	*	*	*	561.98	H. J. Yearly, Abe's Springs.
5	90	101.25	42.00	402.75	507.80	O. Buddington, Green Cove.
12	286	500.00		1,577.00	3,007.19	A. H. Hutchinson, L. City.
					5,150.00	Octavius Almar, Miami.
5	742	*	*	*	3,410.68	D. Gardner, Mandarin.
6	224	*	*	*	2,326.30	A. B. Munn, Pensaco a.
2	200	*	*	*	445.23	F B Wakefield, Apalachicola.
6	225	1,200.00		2,648.00	3,247.23	Saml. Galloway, Quincy.
5	100	82.42	65.00	637.42	1,283.96	Saml. McInnis, White Sp'g.
7	237	+		495.00	375.18	T. S. Coogler, Brooksville.
7	150	*	25.00		837.51	W. F. White, Tampa.
*	*	*	*	*	433.08	T. H. Pittman, Cerro Gordo.
10	900	305.00	48.15	1,115.88	3,179.98	D. L. McKinnon, Marianna.
22	900	250.00		3,300.00	4,584.99	Robt. Meacham, Monticello.
6	120	*	*	375.00	748.75	
31	1,489	205.00	90.00	5,368.78	6,397.61	C. H. Pearce, Tallahassee.
12	400	*	*	*	608.68	W. A. Shands, Bronson.
2	27	86.66	81.20	199.66	356.50	Niel Black, jr., Blue Creek.
11	757	1	145.00	3,373.00	3,307.00	D. Eagan, Madison.
3	60	75.00		450.00	541.43	John P. Bartholf, Manatee.
34	1,509	505.00	1,288.68	6,229.25	2,485.36	H. W. Long, Ocala.
2	488	1	1	2,000.00	1,899.46	Jas. W. Locke, Key West.
7	400	100.00		*	1,651.95	J. C. Emerson, Fernandina.
8	120	*	*	*	449.90	W. A. Lovell, Orlando.
9	252	1		307.49	706.75	W. B. Varn, Bartow.
8	300	50.50	90.00	759.31	1,318.52	E. R. Chadwick, Palatka.
2	75	1	1	*	1,707.99	O. Bronson, St. Augustine.
6	300	1	1	*	899.15	Jas. A. Chaffin, Milton.
8	117	300.00		*	925.30	A. P. Roberts, Leesburg.
2	91	10.00	164.00	1,340.00	1,088.75	J. J. Taylor, Welborn.
10	275	125.00	45.00	700.50	571.32	Jacob Dupree, Shady Grove.
3	79	*	*		394.79	C. H. Spencer, Pt. Orange.
7	258			1,262.18	721.69	S. D. Allen, Crawfordville.
17	515	1	82.00	6,197.00	1,070.07	Daul. McLeod, Ucheesana.
7	195	100.00	75.00	551.04	932.77	Win. J. Tiller, Vernon.
331	14,000	\$5,000.27	\$2,392.03	\$36,578.49	\$59,146.50	

fixed. \$3 per diem and mileage. (Gratuities.